

A SHILLING A WEEK FOR A YEAR! SEE THE GRAND OFFER ON PAGE 56.

The RANGER

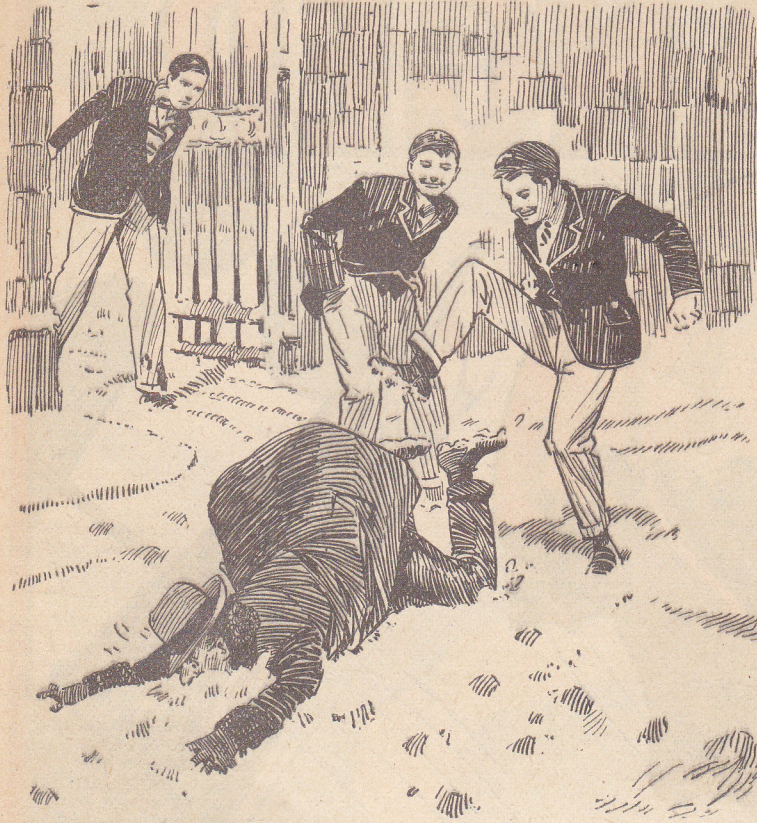
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The Fourth Form at GRIMSLADE!

A ROUSING, COMPLETE STORY
OF SCHOOL LIFE BY POPULAR
FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the Greyfriars stories
appearing every week in the
"Magnet.")



IT WAS A SAD DAY FOR A CERTAIN UNENVIABLE BLACKMAILER WHEN HE TRIED HIS TRICKS ON THE HEADMASTER OF GRIMSLADE. BUT THE GRIMSLADE JUNIORS AND SENIORS GOT A "KICK" OUT OF IT, WHILST THE BLACKMAILER GOT THE SORT OF KICK THAT NOBODY WANTS!

The Snow Battle!

SQUASH!

"Ach! Peast and a prute!" roared Fritz Splitz.
"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Ginger & Co., of Redmayes House at Grimslade.

Squash! Squash!
Ginger Rawlinson, and his chums, Bacon and Bean, had strolled out of gates after morning school, looking for any trouble that might be found in the vicinity of Grimslade. Snow was stacked along the road—unlimited material for snowballs; and all they needed was a target.

A man in a shiny silk-hat and a fur-collared coat came along from the direction of Middlemoor; and Ginger & Co. were terribly tempted to make a target of the shiny silk-hat. Nobly they resisted that temptation.

Then Fatty Fritz rolled out of gates; and unwittingly provided that target for which the Redmayes juniors had been looking. Ginger & Co. gathered up handfuls of snow.

A snowball squashed on Fritz's left ear, and he staggered to starboard. Another squashed on his right ear, and he tottered to port. A third landed on his fat nose, and Fritz sat down with a bump.

He sat and roared.
"Mein gootness! Tat you leaf off! Peasts and prutes and pounders!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Snowballs squashed all over Fritz von Splitz as he sat and roared. He strove to rise, but his feet slipped in the snow, and he sat down again. Ginger & Co. circled round him, shrieking with merriment, and whizzing snowballs.

The man in the fur-collared coat, who was coming along from the village, stared at the scene with a frown. A snowball that missed Fritz, barely missed the stranger, and he came to a halt.

He was not a good-tempered looking man. He had a narrow, foxy face, and a hard, jutting jaw, and cold, fishy-looking eyes of a pale, greenish hue. Evidently such a game as snowballing did not appeal to him in the very least, and he grasped his umbrella, as if with the desire of laying it about the Grimsladers.

Ginger & Co. did not heed him. They did not even see him scowling at them. They were too busy with Fritz.

Friedrich von Splitz rolled in the snow. The Redmayes trio rained snowballs on him as he rolled and roared. Two White's juniors looked out of the gateway—Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson. Fritz yelled to them.

"Ach! Tainty! Tawson! Rescue! Mein gootness! Whoop!"

Dainty and Dawson rushed out at once. Nothing loth, Ginger & Co. rushed to meet them half-way. Fritz Splitz was left gasping in the snow. He scrambled to his feet, his saucer-eyes gleaming with wrath, and gathered up snow in his podgy hands.

The fur-collared stranger, with an angry sniff, strode past him. It was rather unlucky that Fritz hurled his snowball as the foxy-faced man passed. He meant it for Ginger—but it did not reach Ginger. It landed behind the left ear of the stranger.

Smash!

"Ach!" gasped Fritz.

"You young rascal!" roared the fur-collared man, and he swung round at

the startled and dismayed German. He came at him with his folded umbrella grasped in his hand, evidently intended as an instrument of punishment. Fritz Splitz backed away in alarm.

"Ach! Mein tear sir, tat was vun accident," he gasped. "I tink not to trow tat snowball at your head—ach! Donner und blitzen! Whoop!"

Whack, whack, whack!
"Ach! Tat you leaf off!" shrieked Fritz, striving frantically to dodge the swipes of the umbrella. "Peast and a prute! Yaroo!"

Fritz slipped over, and went full length on the snowy road, his face buried in snow. Unintentionally he had placed himself in an excellent position for a whopping. The fur-collared man took immediate advantage of it.

The umbrella rose and fell in a series of terrific whacks; the sharp-tempered gentleman really seemed to fancy that he was beating carpet. Wild yells rose from Fritz Splitz as the whacks landed, hard and fast.

"Ach! Help! Peast and a prute!" shrieked Fritz. "Pang me not on mein trousers! I have a colossal bain in mein trousers! Whooop!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!
"Yaroo! Rescue! Tainty—Tawson—Chinger—Pacon—Pean!" yelled Fritz.

The rivals of Grimslade were hotly engaged outside the school gates snowballing and dodging snowballs, in a state of happy exuberance. More fellows of both Houses came out to join in the strife. But Fritz's frantic yells reached them and drew their attention.

They stared at the sight of a stranger bestowing on a Grimslader such a whopping as even Sammy Sparshott, the Head of Grimslade, seldom bestowed. Fritz was only Fritz; still, he belonged to Grimslade, and the Grimsladers were not going to see him handled like this.

"Pax!" shouted Jim Dainty. "Give that blighter a few."

"My giddy goloshes!" ejaculated Ginger. "He's pitching into poor old Fritz! Go for him, you men!"

And the whole crowd, Reds and Whites, rushed on the scene, and whizzed snowballs at the fur-collared man.

The umbrella ceased to belabour Fritz. Really, it was high time, for the fat German had had enough, if not a little too much. He was roaring with anguish. Nearly a dozen fellows, hurling snowballs from all sides, drew the sharp-tempered gentleman's attention away from Fritz. He turned on the merry juniors with a snarl.

"You young rascals! Ooogh! I will report this to your—wooogh!—headmaster—Grooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him beans!"

"Ach! Giff him blenty of peans!" gurgled Fritz. "I have vun fearful bain in mein trousers! Giff tat peastly prute peans."

Snowballs fairly rained on the fur-collared man. With his foxy-face crimson with fury, he lashed round with the umbrella, but Ginger jerked it away and tossed it along the road.

Then the man grasped Jim Dainty and boxed his ears. But he had time for only one box; for Dainty hooked his leg, and he went down with a bump into the snow. As he rolled there,

spluttering, the juniors whizzed snowballs in volleys. Fritz von Splitz scrambled up, and joined in.

The hapless stranger, by this time almost foaming with rage, jumped to his feet. He grabbed Ginger with one hand, and Streaky Bacon with the other, and brought their heads together with a sounding crack. Simultaneous yells from Ginger and Streaky rang far and wide.

They grabbed him, and the three went down together. Snowballs rained on all three as they rolled in the thick snow. The silk-hat was off, and somebody trod on it—the fur-collared coat lost most of its buttons, and flew open, and two or three articles that dropped from the hapless man's pockets were trampled in the snow and disappeared from sight.

Wild howls and gurgles came from the foxy-faced man. Up he scrambled once more, and—no longer seeking vengeance on the playful Grimsladers—he fairly bolted. Hatless, with his coat streaming in the wind, he ran for the school gates, and after him pelted the juniors, still hurling snowballs. They rained on the fleeing man till he turned in at the gateway and vanished.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Jim Dainty. "He's gone in to see the Head—that will mean a row!"

"Let it!" said Ginger Rawlinson cheerfully. "Here's one for your nob, you White's tick!"

And the snow-battle commenced again, and the juniors forgot all about the dishevelled man who had rushed in at the school gates. Up and down the road, with shouts and yells and merry laughter, went the crowd—excepting Fritz von Splitz.

Fritz had no taste for strenuous exercises. He remained on the spot, to stamp on the stranger's hat. He would have preferred to stamp on its owner; but the hat, at least, was at his mercy, and the vengeful German stamped on it till it resembled anything but a hat.

Then his saucer-eyes fell on a leather pocket-book that lay half-buried in snow, evidently having fallen from one of the stranger's pockets in the tussle. He pounced on it, and with a swing of his podgy arm, sent it whizzing through the frosty air, to fall at a distance beyond the frozen hawthorn hedge. He grinned as it disappeared.

"Ach! Berhaps tat peastly pounder tink two times before he whop me mit vun umbrella after!" chuckled Fritz. "I tink tat he vill look a ferry long time before he find tat bocket-pook, isn't it!"

And Fritz Splitz rolled away, grinning, leaving the rivals of Grimslade still fighting out their snow-battle.

Sammy's Way!

DR. SPARSHOTT, Head of Grimslade, stared. He was walking in the quad with Mr. Redmayes and Mr. White, the House-masters, when a remarkable sight burst on his gaze.

A dishevelled, hatless man came streaking in at the gates, smothered with snow and panting for breath. He glared round him, and Grimslade fellows stared at him and chuckled. Catching sight of the three masters, he headed for them.

Sammy Sparshott eyed him rather severely; the Housemasters smiled. But the snowy stranger did not smile. He was spluttering with rage.

"Dr. Sparshott!" he gasped.

"Well, sir?" rapped the Head of Grimslade.

"Look at me! I have been attacked—assaulted—by a crew of young ruffians!" yelled the foxy-featured man.

"That does not concern me, sir!" barked Sammy Sparshott. "I have authority only over boys belonging to this school!"

"They are Grimslade boys—"

"Then your description of them is incorrect. There are no young ruffians at Grimslade!"

"Look at me!"

"I am looking, sir!" barked Sammy.

"I do not believe that Grimslade boys would snowball a stranger without provocation. But I shall inquire into the matter. Come with me!"

The two Housemasters walked away, and the panting stranger followed Dr. Sparshott to his study in Big School. He was getting a little calmer now; but his greenish eyes still gleamed with rage, and he gasped and panted for breath.

In the study, Dr. Sparshott shut the door and turned on his visitor. His face was grim and his eyes like steel.

"Are you the man I have been expecting—the Mr. Chark who telephoned to me?" he demanded.

"I am!" snapped the man with the foxy face. "And this reception—"

"Never mind that! We will come to business at once," said Dr. Sparshott tersely. "From what you said to me on the telephone, Mr. Chark, I gather that you are a blackmailing scoundrel!"

The greenish eyes glittered.

"I recommend you to use milder language, Dr. Sparshott!" said Mr. Chark, between his teeth. "I told you that I would call, to arrange this matter, if possible, in an amicable manner. If you prefer disgrace, and the name of Grimslade School and its headmaster in all the newspapers in the kingdom—"

"That is a threat!" said Dr. Sparshott.

"Take it as you please, sir!" said Mr. Chark, shrugging his shoulders.

The athletic young man who was headmaster of Grimslade School towered over the foxy-featured gentleman. Mr. Chark made a backward step to the door.

"Any violence, sir—" he faltered.

"We shall see," said Dr. Sparshott calmly. "I think it very probable that I shall throw you out of Grimslade with my own hands, Mr. Chark. But we will go into the matter first."

"I think you had better!" said Mr. Chark, with a venomous look.

Dr. Sparshott sat on the edge of his writing-table, his long legs stretched out before him, and regarded the fur-collared man with a quiet, meditative look. He did not ask his visitor to be seated.

"You were not too explicit on the telephone, sir!" he barked. "No doubt you did not desire any ears at the exchange to catch your drift. Make it clear!"

"A few words will do that," sneered Mr. Chark. "You have a cousin named Stephen Sparshott."

"Whom I have not seen for ten years."

"No doubt. I gathered that he has been rather a wastrel, and not a credit to his family!" sneered Mr. Chark.

"He has been living abroad, and has, I believe, gone abroad again—in fact, it was to raise money for some venture in South America that he came to us—"

"To a firm of moneylenders?"

"Exactly. He gave us a post-dated cheque for one hundred pounds in return for a loan—"

"Probably for half the amount!" grunted Sammy.

"That is immaterial. At all events, the amount of the cheque included the interest on the loan. The cheque was made out to Stephen Sparshott by a Mr. John Walker, and endorsed by your cousin on the back. We have reason to believe that Mr. John Walker never signed the cheque, never even saw it."

(Continued on page 57.)



"Boys!" barked Sammy Sparshott. "See that man out of the gates! He is a rascal! Snowball him! Do you hear?" With a joyful yell, the Grimsladers rushed to obey Sammy's order. Snowballs rained on the hapless blackmailer as he ran for the gates. Behind him, and round him, shouted and whooped the Grimsladers. Sammy, from his window watched, with a grim smile.

THE FOURTH FORM AT GRIMSLADE!

(Continued from page 51.)

"Put it plain!" barked Sammy. "Stephen gave you a forged cheque, which you knew to be forged. You accepted it, believing that before the date came for it to be presented, either he would redeem it, or you would be able to get the money from his relations."

"You may, of course, put the matter as you please," said Mr. Chark, with another shrug of the shoulders. "At all events, the cheque is now due for payment; and if it is presented at the bank it will be discovered to be a forgery. Mr. Walker will learn that Stephen Sparshott, then a guest in his house, purloined a cheque from his cheque-book, imitated his signature, and passed the cheque on my firm! We have no special desire to send your relative to penal servitude, Dr. Sparshott."

Sammy's eyes glittered. "If he has gone to South America you might find that difficult," he said. "He is not likely to return to this country, in the circumstances. I have no responsibility whatever for my cousin, an older man than myself, but I do not choose that one of my family should rob even a moneylender. Produce the cheque and prove your statement, and I will pay you the sum in question."

"You do not seem to have the matter quite clear, sir!" said Mr. Chark, with cool amusement. "That cheque is worth more than a hundred pounds."

"It is worth absolutely nothing!" said Sammy Sparshott, staring. "You cannot get a shilling on a forged cheque. All you can do is to send the rascal to gaol—if you can get him back from South America, which I very much doubt."

Mr. Chark laughed contemptuously. "The question is whether Stephen Sparshott's relations are willing for the matter to go to prosecution," he said. "One of them, at least, holds a very prominent position—headmaster of a famous Public school—"

"I understand! That is blackmail!" "An unpleasant word!" smiled Mr. Chark. "Let us put it rather that my firm has a slip of paper for sale which it might pay you to purchase. The price is one thousand pounds."

"The price is what?" roared Sammy. "One thousand pounds, sir!" said Mr. Chark coolly. "Quite a moderate price, I think, in the circumstances. For that sum this valuable slip of paper will be placed in your hands. Otherwise—"

"Otherwise?" said Sammy grimly. "If the matter goes to the courts, sir, I regret to say that the disgrace will fall not only on the wrong-doer, but on all who bear his name," said Mr. Chark. "Especially, I fear, on one who holds a high position, and is much in the public eye—and whose initials are the same, even! S. Sparshott, the forger, and S. Sparshott, the headmaster, will be very much mixed in the public mind, I fear! I hardly think it would be possible for you to continue to hold your present position, sir, after your name has been thus dragged through the mud and mire of the law courts."

Dr. Sparshott's eyes glinted, but he remained sitting quietly on the edge of the table, his eyes on the foxy face. His quiet calmness deceived the foxy man, who went on with more confidence:

"Come, sir, you are a business man! You know the value of your post here. You know that you could not keep it after my firm had used the law courts as a medium of publicity on such a subject. It is worth more than a thousand pounds to you to end the matter before it begins."

"I would not face such disgrace for ten thousand pounds, Mr. Chark," said Dr. Sparshott. "But I would not yield to a blackmailer's threat for ten millions! Get out!"

"You are not serious, sir!" "You will find that I am perfectly serious," said Sammy. "I should have been willing to pay you the face-value of the cheque, wholly and solely because I would not have even a rascal robbed by a relative of mine. Not for any other reason, Mr. Chark. I now withdraw that offer. I will pay you nothing! Do your worst! Now get out! I am going to kick you as you go!"

Sammy Sparshott slipped from the table. He threw the study door open and stood beside the doorway, his right foot slightly raised. Evidently Sammy was going to be as good as his word.

Mr. Chark stared at him. "Are you going?" asked Sammy. "You will repent this!" said the blackmailer, between his teeth. "I will drag your name in the mire! I will—Hands off! Oh!"

A grasp of iron fell on Mr. Chark's collar. He spun round into the doorway. Crash! came Sammy's foot behind him, and Mr. Chark flew into the passage.

He landed there on his hands and knees, with a yell. Byles, the Head's servant, came running up in amazement.

"Byles!" roared Sammy. "Yessir!" gasped Byles. "Kick that man out! Kick him hard!"

"Certainly, sir!" "I'll have the law! I'll prosecute! I—I—I'll—Whooop!" shrieked Mr. Chark, as Byles got busy.

He rolled and squirmed and scrambled to the door, with Byles behind him, kicking hard, as his master had directed. Sammy Sparshott threw open the study window and leaned out.

"Boys!" he barked. "See that man out of the gates! He is a rascal! Snowball him! Do you hear?" Sammy Sparshott was original in many ways as a headmaster. Often he

surprised Grimslade. But probably he had never surprised Grimslade so much as he did now. The crowd of fellows in the quadrangle stared.

Mr. Chark, with Byles' foot behind, came rolling out of the doorway. Then, with a joyful yell, the Grimsladers rushed to obey Sammy's order. It was a surprising order—but Sammy's orders were never questioned. There was plenty of snow in the quad. Snowballs rained on the hapless blackmailer, as he scrambled to his feet and ran for the gates.

Behind him, and round him, shouted and whooped the Grimsladers. Sammy, from his window, watched with a grim smile. Gasping and panting and howling, Mr. Chark ran for his life. Volleys of snowballs accompanied him to the gates. Outside he ran into the snow-battle that was still going on.

"My giddy goloshes!" yelled Ginger Rawlinson. "Here's that sportsman again! Give him a few more!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Jim Dainty & Co. piled in at once. Fifty fellows, at least, chased Mr. Chark up the lane towards Middlemoor, whizzing snowballs. By the time he escaped Mr. Chark was probably sorry that he had called at Grimslade School that morning.

Under the Shadow.

"WHAT'S the matter with Sammy?"

Quite a number of Grimslade fellows asked that question the following day.

Dr. Sparshott was not the man to wear his heart on his sleeve. Troubles came his way at times, as they come the way of all men; but Sammy took trouble in his stride, as it were, and gave no sign. But for once Sammy was wincing under a blow.

Plenty of fellows observed an unaccustomed cloud on Sammy's face. The Sixth Form found him, for the first time in their experience, a little absent-minded in class.

Ginger Rawlinson of the Fourth, who had lines for Sammy, forgot them—and remembered them too late. Sammy, of course, never forgot lines, or anything else. Yet, to Ginger's amazement, Sammy never inquired after those lines. Hardly believing in his good luck, Ginger left it at that.

Still more surprising, Sniggs of the Second, up for having broken a window with a snowball, and fully expecting six, and having packed his trousers with exercise-books ready, presented himself in the Head's study—and there was no whooping! Sammy told him to be more careful, and waved him away.

One of the exercise-books slid down, and plumped on the floor as Sniggs retreated, and for a moment, then, Sammy smiled something like his old smile. Sniggs, crimson, grabbed up the book and fled so hastily that he forgot to shut the door after him.

Going back to shut it, he saw that Sammy was leaning his chin on his hands, staring straight before him, with a black and gloomy brow. He departed again on tiptoe, awed.

He told all the school, in the quad, in hushed tones. Fellows, with serious faces, asked one another what was the matter with Sammy.

Sammy Sparshott was rather a tartar sometimes. Fellows never quite knew whether they loved him like a brother, or hated him like mathematics. But the bare idea that there was something "up" with Sammy, made them realise what a lot they thought of their young headmaster.

Jim Dainty and Ginger Rawlinson, who agreed about nothing else, would have gone together through fire and water for Sammy. Even Fritz Splitz was faintly concerned.

"Tat Sammy is town on his luck," Fritz told Dainty and Dawson, in Study No. 10. "I see him walk in te quad, and he have vun ferry long face. I fink perhaps he do not eat enoff! It is a

SCHOOL STORIES WITH A PUNCH!



Every week the MAGNET contains a ripping long complete school story of Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of Greyfriars, whose rollicking adventures and schoolboy japes will keep you in fits of laughter. Sample the tip-top yarn by Frank Richards in this week's issue of

THE Magnet

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ferry serious madder to lose te appetite, ain't it!"

Jim Dainty, observing Sammy from afar, with a keen eye, was sure that there was some trouble on, though he did not, like Fatty Fritz, suppose that it had any connection with meals.

Little did the Grimsladers dream of what was worrying Sammy. The man who feared nothing else, feared the shadow of shame. And Sammy knew, as well as the foxy-faced Mr. Chark, that he could never carry on at Grimslade after his name had been dragged through the mire of the law courts. And the bare thought of quitting Grimslade made Sammy wince.

He had dealt with the blackmailer in the way Mr. Chark might have expected, had he known Sammy better. Now he was waiting for the blow to fall. Nothing would have induced him to yield to a threat. But he had to face the music.

After school that day, Dr. Sparshott went for a long tramp on the moors, in the winter darkness, thinking out his problem. Coming back by way of Middlemoor Lane, he was startled out of his deep and rather gloomy meditations by the sight of a light twinkling in the darkness of the road a dozen yards from the gates of Grimslade.

"What the dickens!" murmured Sammy, coming to a halt.

A dark, bent figure, scarcely seen in the wintry gloom, was moving about the road, rooting into the trampled snow, flashing to and fro the light of an electric torch. Sammy watched it for a moment or two, and then spoke.

"Lost something? Can I help you?"

There was a startled exclamation, and the shadowy figure leaped upright. Two startled greenish eyes stared at Dr. Sparshott. Dark as it was, Sammy recognised the man now.

"You, Mr. Chark!" His look was grim, his voice metallic. "What are you doing here?"

Chark backed away a little.

"I—I am looking for—for something," he stammered. "A—a purse that I must have dropped when the boys attacked me here yesterday. Unless they have stolen it!"

"There are no thieves at Grimslade, Mr. Chark, since you were kicked out," said Dr. Sparshott. "I imagine you have lost something, or you would not be searching here—but not a purse, for I can see that you are lying."

"Property of mine, at any rate!" snarled Mr. Chark. "I have been searching almost all the day, and now I—"

"Now you have finished!" said Dr. Sparshott. "You are not the kind of man I like to see near the school. Clear!"

"Do you dare to order me off a public road?" snarled Chark. "I shall remain as long as I choose."

"Admitted!" said Sammy. "But as long as you remain, I shall kick you. Remain as long as you like, my black-mailing friend!"

His foot shot out, and Mr. Chark—deciding suddenly not to remain any longer, in spite of his undoubted right to remain as long as he liked on a public road—jumped away, and ran. Sammy's foot landed again as he ran, and had the effect of an accelerator.

A yell floated back from the darkness, and Mr. Chark vanished into the night. Somewhat solaced, Dr. Sparshott went into the school.

The next morning there was a look about Sammy Sparshott's eyes which hinted that he had slept little. Cool and calm and self-possessed as he was, Sammy could not wholly hide the signs of his trouble.

The blow must fall—and he was trying to decide whether he had not better resign, and go, before it fell, so that the name of Grimslade, at least, might not be dragged in the mire along with his own name. Yet he could hardly bear the thought of leaving Grimslade—where lay his life's work.

"Sammy's up against it, somehow,"

Jim Dainty remarked to Dick Dawson, as they walked out of gates after morning school. "It's rotten—a splendid man like old Sammy—Hallo, there's that sportsman again!"

In the frosty sunshine Mr. Chark was recognisable at a distance, as he rooted about the snow in the road. The juniors were not aware of it, but Mr. Chark had been there since dawn. They could see that he looked tired, was in a ferocious temper. He was stooping, grabbing in the snow, searching, and searching, and searching.

The two juniors stopped to look at him in wonder. Mr. Chark rose, and came towards them, trying hard to adopt a genial smile, though his greenish eyes glittered with rage and malice.

"Excuse me, young gentlemen," he said, "I think you were among the boys who snowballed me the day before yesterday."

"Right on the wicket!" agreed Jim Dainty. "Want some more, old bean?"

"I lost a—a—a pocket-book, and did not miss it till after I had returned to Blackmoor," said Mr. Chark. "I searched for it yesterday, and—and last night—but have not found it. Did you see anything of it?" His green eyes scanned the faces of the schoolboys suspiciously.

"Might be anywhere in this snow," answered Jim. "I've seen nothing of it."

"I have searched—and searched!" Chark ground his teeth. "It must have been found. Some young scoundrel has found it and stolen it—or perhaps Sparshott himself! That would account for—"

"Perhaps what?" yelled Jim Dainty. The suggestion that Dr. Sparshott, Head of Grimslade, might have found the man's notebook and "pinched it," rather took Jim's breath away.

"You cheeky rotter!" roared Dawson indignantly.

Chark gritted his teeth.

But he turned away from the juniors and recommenced his search for the pocket-book that Fritz von Splitz had hurled far beyond the hedges. He was not likely to find it!

Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson glared at him. He gave them no further heed. Fatigued and furious, but desperately determined to find the lost pocket-book, he moved along the road, bent double, grabbing at the tumbled snow, scanning the slush. Jim Dainty stepped behind him. His foot came with a terrific crash on the coat-tails of Mr. Chark.

"Whooop!"

The blackmailer pitched forward and crashed down with his face in the snow. "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

With a fierce oath, Mr. Chark twisted round and leaped to his feet. He sprang like a tiger at Jim Dainty.

"Back up!" gasped Dainty.

He gave grasp for grasp, and Dick Dawson joined in, and the three of them rolled struggling in the snow. Trafford of the Sixth, captain of Grimslade, came out of the gates and stared at the scene.

"What's this game?" roared Trafford, grasping the two juniors by their collars and wrenching them away from Mr. Chark by main force.

"Ow! Leggo!" gasped Dainty.

"You young rascal! What are you ragging this man for?" thundered the Grimslade captain.

"Leggo, you ass! He says he's lost a pocket-book, and that Sammy may have pinched it!"

"What?" yelled Trafford.

He let go the two juniors and strode towards Mr. Chark, who had staggered to his feet.

"You're the man who called on Dr. Sparshott the other day!" he snapped. "I remember your face! He had you kicked out! And now you say my headmaster—"

"Hands off, you fool!" snarled Chark. "Your headmaster will not be at Grimslade much longer. I will crush

him like a worm!" The man's rage and malice came out in a torrent. "I will ruin him!"

"Will you?" said Trafford grimly. "I don't quite see how you'll do it, you lying toad; but I know you're not going to talk about Sammy Sparshott like that. Put up your hands!"

A crashing fist on his sharp nose made Mr. Chark stagger and yell. He hurled himself at Trafford, and the big Sixth-Former met him with left and right.

"Go it, Trafford!" yelled Jim Dainty in great delight.

"Hurrah!" shouted Dawson.

Trafford was going it hot and strong. It was a man against a boy, but Mr. Chark did not seem to have much chance. He retreated step by step, the Grimslade captain following him up, hitting all the time. The two juniors watched the scrap with grinning faces. Mr. Chark fairly took to his heels at last, dodged through a gap in the hedge, and fled across the field.

Trafford dabbed his nose with his handkerchief and walked on. Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson cut through the gap to give Mr. Chark a few snowballs as he went. Gathering snow as they ran, they charged after the fleeing blackmailer and pelted him till he escaped across the field and disappeared over the farther hedge. A shout of laughter followed him. Then the juniors, chuckling, walked back towards the road.

Saving Sammy!

JIM DAINTY jumped.

"Oh, my hat! Look!"

He stooped and picked up a pocket-book from a rut in the snowy field. But for the fact that they had chased Mr. Chark across the field the juniors would never have seen anything of that pocket-book; it might have lain there for weeks undiscovered.

"Is that what the sportsman was looking for?" asked Dawson.

"Well, he said a pocket-book; but he lost it on the road, and this is a dozen yards from the road," answered Jim. "I shall make jolly sure it's his before I let him have it, you can bet! It looks to me as if that foxy-faced rotter has something to do with Sammy's worry. You heard what he said to Trafford. I'll see if there's a name inside, anyhow."

Jim Dainty opened the pocket-book to look for the name of the owner. There was no name to be seen, but there were a good many papers inside, most of them old letters.

"You'll find the owner's name there," said Dawson.

Jim Dainty nodded and glanced through the papers. One of them was an engraved slip, and he stared at it as he saw it. It was a cheque, made out to "S. Sparshott," signed "John Walker," and endorsed "S. Sparshott" on the back. Jim stared at it blankly. The cheque was for one hundred pounds.

"Great pip!" he exclaimed in amazement. "That must belong to Sammy! Sammy's 'S. Sparshott.' Look! It's a cheque for one hundred pounds! Great Scott! This must be Sammy's pocket-book! His cheque couldn't be in anybody else's."

"Lucky we found it!" said Dick. "Sammy will be pleased!"

"What-ho!" said Jim Dainty.

He slipped it into his pocket, and the two juniors walked back to Grimslade. Jim Dainty went over at once to Big School. He tapped at the Head's study door and opened it.

Then he gave a violent start.

Dr. Sparshott was there, but evidently he had not heard the tap at the door. He was seated at his writing-table, his elbows resting there, and his face sunk into his hands. He did not look up; he neither saw nor heard the junior at the door.

Jim looked at him and caught his

breath. Taken unawares, Sammy was giving himself thoroughly away. Only for a second Jim looked at him. He knew how Sammy would hate to be caught in a moment of weakness. With great tact Jim stepped back into the passage and gave the door a sounding thump before he pushed it open again.

"Come in!" Dr. Sparshott was quite himself when Dainty entered the second time. His face was a little pale, but calm and self-possessed.

"What is it, Dainty?" he asked.

"I've found this, sir!" Jim laid the pocket-book on the Head's table and the cheque beside it. Dr. Sparshott looked at them and made an almost convulsive movement. For some moments his eyes were fixed on the cheque. Then he raised them to Dainty's face, with an expression on his own that Jim could not fathom.

"How did these articles come into your possession, Dainty?" he asked quietly.

"I picked up the pocket-book in the fields, sir, and looked into it to find the owner. I found this cheque in it, and thought it must be yours."

Dr. Sparshott passed his hand across his brow. His fingers came away wet with perspiration.

For a moment he did not speak. Jim Dainty stood silent. A smile came over Sammy's face.

"Thank you, Dainty," he said evenly. "The pocket-book is not mine, but I know the owner and will return it to him. You may leave it with me."

"Yes, sir."

Jim Dainty left the study. Dr. Sparshott rose to his feet. He picked up the cheque—on which the initial "S"—though Jim Dainty had not thought of it—did not stand for Samuel, but for Stephen. He stood for some moments with the slip of paper between his fingers. This was the blackmailer's weapon—and it was in the hand of the man he had attempted to blackmail!

Sammy could understand now why Mr. Chark had been so anxious to find what he had lost on the snowy road. The blackmailer's teeth were drawn by the loss of the forged cheque.

Disgrace, the shadow of shame, the bitter certainty of leaving Grimslade—all had weighed like lead on Sammy

Sparshott's heart and mind. The weight was lifted now.

He crossed to the fireplace and dropped the cheque into the flames; it was consumed in a moment, and Sammy drew a long, deep breath.

Then Dr. Sparshott slipped the pocket-book into his pocket, ordered his car, and drove away to Blackmoor.

Mr. Chark, in his room at the Blackmoor Arms, was tenderly caressing a damaged nose and dabbing at a shadowed eye, when Dr. Sparshott's name was brought up.

A minute later the Head of Grimslade was shown in. Mr. Chark rose to his feet, eyeing him curiously. Until he found the lost pocket-book he was powerless, but it seemed to him that this visit could only mean surrender. He forgot the effect of Trafford's knuckles on his foxy face at the happy thought of leaving Blackmoor richer by a thousand pounds.

"You have called to make terms, I presume?" he said.

"To conclude our business, at least, Mr. Chark," said Dr. Sparshott. "This is your property, I believe." He threw a pocket-book on the table.

Mr. Chark, with a surprised exclamation, pounced on it.

"You—you found it?" he ejaculated. "A Grimslade boy found it and handed it to me, Mr. Chark. I judge that it is your property."

"Quite so!" said Mr. Chark. "It is mine! And the contents—"

"Nothing that belongs to you has been removed from the pocket-book, sir; you may be sure of that," answered Dr. Sparshott contemptuously. "A forged cheque, which Stephen Sparshott had no right to give you, was not your property."

Chark gritted his teeth.

"The cheque—"

"No longer exists," said Dr. Sparshott calmly. "Your little speculation in blackmail is a complete wash-out, Mr. Chark. I could prosecute you for your attempt to extort money, but I prefer a shorter and simpler method of dealing with a person of your description. I have something for you here."

Sammy Sparshott's hand slipped under his coat, and reappeared with a riding-whip in it.

He laid on the riding-whip as he had

never laid on the cane at Grimslade. Never had a rascal had a more efficient thrashing. When he had finished, it was a gasping, howling, squirming, groaning wretch that he tossed contemptuously away. Dr. Sparshott stared down grimly at the howling rascal.

"I shall call again to-morrow, Mr. Chark," he said. "If you are still in Blackmoor you will know what to expect."

And Sammy tucked the whip under his arm, walked back to his car, and drove off to Grimslade.

Needless to say, Mr. Chark was not in Blackmoor the next day!

Jim Dainty grinned, "Sammy's all right again!" he remarked.

"Looks it!" agreed Dawson.

Sammy Sparshott came across the quad with a step light and elastic, almost as if he was walking on air. His face had its old cheery smile. Whatever Sammy's trouble had been, it was evidently gone now.

After school that day Jim Dainty was sent for to the Head's study.

The Head was smiling genially. The table was set for tea—and it exhibited such a spread as might have made any fellow's mouth water. Sammy, spotting the wonder in the junior's face, chuckled.

"No, it isn't six, Dainty," he said. "I want you to tea with me. Like to ask any friends? The more the merrier!"

That offer was too good to be refused. Byles was dispatched to call Dawson and Fritz Splitz from White's, and Ginger & Co. from Redmayes' House. Never had the juniors enjoyed a spread as they enjoyed that spread in Sammy's study. Even Fritz Splitz had enough—or, rather, more than enough. "Tat Sammy is a chewel!" declared Fritz, when the guests walked away to their Houses at last.

And the fellows agreed unanimously that Sammy was a jewel of the purest water.

"It's a Long Way to Wembley!" Another grand story in our special series of Cuptie footer yarns coming next week. Read how Rashton Rangers fight their way through the next round of the F.A. Cup in thrilling style!

THE CHIEF RANGER CHATS.

Dear Buddies,—I hope you will all enter the simple painting competition on page 56, and have a shot at winning the handsome prizes offered. Don't forget, you need not copy the colouring effects of the RANGER artist unless you wish to. If you think you can produce better results by using your own combination of colours, by all means try. In any case, you will find this competition just the thing to fill up an odd hour when there's nothing else to do.

Next Saturday, up and down the country, the various Cupties in the Fourth Round of the Football Association Challenge Cup will be played, and in keeping with the occasion the RANGER programme will include a special Cuptie Soccer story by Hedley Scott. This second yarn in his "It's a Long Way to Wembley" series, is a winner so don't miss it! Make sure of next Saturday's RANGER—it's a wow!

Chin, chin.

The Chief Ranger

RANGER DAN'S BULL'S-EYES!

WRONG NUMBER.

Motorist (phoning to garage after an accident): "Is that the garage? Can you send me any help—I've turned turtle."

Garage man: "Sorry, sir, this is a garage—not a zoo!"

(A Combination Knife has been awarded to A. Burnett, 25, Cheltham Terrace, Bridgend.)

MISTAKEN IDENTITY.

Bill: "Why aren't you working to-day, Alf?"

Alf: "The foreman sacked me yesterday. You see, a foreman is one who stands around and watches the men work."

Bill: "Well, what's that got to do with it?"

Alf: "Oh, he got jealous of me because people thought I was the foreman."

(A Pocket Wallet has been awarded to F. Street, 6, Moorfields, Nantwich.)

OBEYING ORDERS.

It was reading-lesson, and Jimmy was reciting from a book. He had come to the word "barque," which he was unable to pronounce.

"Barque," prompted the teacher, pronouncing it for him.

Jimmy still remained silent.

"Barque!" repeated the teacher impatiently.

"Bow-wow!" said Jimmy obediently. (A Grand Prize has been awarded to S. Scott, Mandurah, Australia.)

MUSIC ON THE BRAIN.

Jim: "My father died as a result of music on the brain."

Jack: "What do you mean?"

Jim: "A piano fell on his head!" (A Pocket Wallet has been awarded to A. Howe, Council Offices, Whickham, Newcastle-on-Tyne.)

HEALING THE HEEL.

"This ointment will heal anything," said the hawker.

"I'll take a tin, then," said the housewife. "Perhaps it will heal my shoes!" (A Pocket Wallet has been awarded to A. Mair, 151, Whitehill Street, Glasgow.)

BY REQUEST.

Diner (to leader of restaurant orchestra): "Do you play anything by request?"

Band Leader (delighted): "Oh, yes, sir."

Diner: "Then please go and play dominoes until I've finished my lunch."

(A Pocket Wallet has been awarded to J. Bland, 6, Richmond Road, Tottenham, N.15.)

Send your joke to "Ranger Dan," THE RANGER, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). The sender of every joke published will receive a handsome prize.